



## PCT PLEDGE

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## CAST PUBLIC EDUCATION VOTES

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

This November our votes must be cast to protect public education and the people who provide it. We have seen politicians from both parties dance to the tune of the corporate interests whose goal is to privatize education, turning it from an institutional bedrock of our democracy to a profit center. The staggering amount of money dedicated to discrediting the wonderful work you do can only be countered, in the end, by our numbers. While we will continue to raise VOTE/COPE money, the truth is we will never have what our opponents can muster. But they don't have the potential voting power we have.

This year the NYSUT/PCT endorsements have been done through the lens of who supports public education. Who was with us in opposing the property tax cap. Who stood with us in opposition to the creation of a retirement Tier 6. Who is willing to confront the evils of New York's high states testing regime.

Here are the candidates who offer the best hope of maintaining public education as we know it. They aren't all perfect. We have strong differences with some. You will note that in some contests we have no endorsement to offer. All but Ryan Cronin in the 6<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District have been endorsed by both the PCT and NYSUT. Cronin has been endorsed by the PCT Executive Board in the absence of any endorsement by NYSUT which took no position owing to a difference of opinion among AFL-CIO locals. Where there is no endorsement, neither NYSUT nor the PCT was able to identify any public education friendly candidate.

### FEDERAL ELECTIONS

PARTY	NAME
	<b>PRESIDENT</b>
D	<b>Barack Obama</b>
	<b>U.S. SENATE</b>
D	<b>Kirsten Gillibrand</b>

### HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT	PARTY	NAME
1	D/I/WF	<b>Tim Bishop</b>
2	No endorsement	
3	D/I/WF	<b>Steve Israel</b>
4	D/I/WF	<b>Carolyn McCarthy</b>

### N.Y. STATE SENATE

1	R/C/I	<b>Kenneth LaValle</b>
2	No endorsement	
3	No endorsement	
4	D	<b>Ricardo Montano</b>
5	No endorsement	
6	D	<b>Ryan Cronin</b>
7	No endorsement	
8	No endorsement	
9	No endorsement	

### NY STATE ASSEMBLY

1	No endorsement	
2	No endorsement	
3	R	<b>Dean Murray</b>
4	No endorsement	
5	R/C	<b>Al Graf</b>
6	D/I/WF	<b>Philip Ramos</b>
7	D	<b>Christopher Bodkin</b>
8	No endorsement	
9	R/C/I	<b>Joseph Saladino</b>
10	D	<b>Joseph Dujmic</b>
11	No endorsement	
12	R/C/I	<b>Andrew Raia</b>
13	D	<b>Charles Lavine</b>
14	R/C/I	<b>David McDonough</b>
15	No endorsement	
16	D	<b>Michelle Schimel</b>
17	No endorsement	
18	No endorsement	
19	No endorsement	
20	D	<b>Harvey Weisenberg</b>
21	D	<b>Jeffery Friedman</b>
22	D	<b>Michaelle Solages</b>

Those who like to think that our union only supports Democrats, take a close look and observe how many Republicans have been endorsed on the basis of their support for us on crucial issues.

Finally, in recent years I've seen some evidence to show that teachers on Long Island don't routinely vote. Failure to vote in the current political environment is an invitation to the anti-public education forces to simply roll over us. Don't let that happen. VOTE!

### VOTE/COPE

SRC Reps are beginning their yearly VOTE/COPE collection. Once again, the PCT Executive Board is recommending a \$40 per member contribution. For those who are new to our ranks, VOTE/COPE is NYSUT's political action fund. None of your dues money is used

for political purposes. The political work that NYSUT and the PCT do are all funded out of the voluntary contributions of our members. Up to 40 percent of members' contributions comes back to the PCT to fund our campaigns in support of the budget, Board of Education election, and campaign like our current effort to change New York's high stakes testing program. The regrettable fact is that elections take money, and these days we are heavily outspent by those who seek to destroy public education and privatize it. While we can never raise as much money as these people have, we can and must do better. As PCT President Morty Rosenfeld has been saying at recent building meetings, "If members can't see why we have to do a better job at political action after the last few years of attacks from Albany on our profession, we deserve what we get."

Collecting money is one of the worst parts of an SRC Rep's job. Members are asked to alleviate this burden by not waiting to be asked and cajoled into giving, Simply write a check to VOTE/COPE for \$40 or more if you can afford it and give it to one of your SRC Reps today.

### **403b CONTRIBUTIONS 2013**

**The IRS has recently announced the 2013 Maximum Allowable Contribution (MAC) limits, including several significant changes from previous limits for the 2012 calendar year.**

The elective deferral limit for 403(b)/457 plans has increased to \$17,500 (from a previous limit of \$17,000). All catch up extensions will remain unchanged in 2013. Employees age 50 and over will be entitled to contribute an additional \$5,500 to their 403(b)/457 plan(s) thereby increasing the elective deferral limit to \$23,000. Individuals with at least 15 years of service with their current employer may be entitled to contribute up to an additional \$3,000 above their age-based limit, potentially increasing the limit to \$26,000 for a participant utilizing both the age based and the full amount of the service based catch-up provisions.

### **APPR IMPLEMENTATION**

The APPR Plan is now finished. The document is being edited and will be signed shortly.

That doesn't mean that we can simply forget about it. The challenge to the PCT is to make sure the plan is being properly implemented. Any plan as complicated as this one is bound to lead to misunderstandings and misapplications.

PCT President Morty Rosenfeld has asked each SRC Head Rep to conduct a survey of each school, making sure that every teacher knows how the APPR plan applies to her and being especially sure that every teacher required to have a SLO is

actively engaged in a cooperative effort with their supervisor(s) to complete it as soon as possible.

Members who are experiencing difficulties with the APPR process should report the problem to their Head SRC Rep. Central Office and the PCT have agreed to work through any problems as they turn up.

### **FIXING NY'S TESTING**

Slowly, but surely, people who understand what New York's flawed testing regime is doing to our schools, our student and teachers are finding ways to work together to bring about sorely needed change, each group from a slightly different perspective, but teacher, principals, parents and central office administrators recognizing that New York's testing program must be changed.

For our part, PCT members received an email from Morty Rosenfeld asking them to use [a NYSUT webpage](#) to send a message to Commissioner King and the Regents about what the out-of-control testing is doing to their students. Teacher members who haven't checked their email in a few days are asked to do so, being sure to let the Commissioner and Regents know how the state's testing is affecting you and your students.

The PCT has also arranged with the PTA to do two more showings of the film *Race to Nowhere* which movingly depicts the untoward and unnecessary pressures we put on young people today in our schools.

We have also spoken to anyone who will listen to us about putting together a Long Island-wide lobby week, in which representatives of unions, administrators, parents, boards of education and like-minded people from all walks meet with their elected representatives to speak with one loud voice demanding an end to testing as we currently know it in New York.

We also continue to use our webpage, Pledge, and Facebook page to inform people of the damaging effects of testing and what we need to do about this central problem. These efforts will all pick up steam after Election Day.

Have a good story about how testing is impairing your teaching or adversely affecting your students, email it to PCT President Morty Rosenfeld at [mrosenfeld@pobct.org](mailto:mrosenfeld@pobct.org). Morty has been using these stories in his blog, [A Teachable Moment](#).